

Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



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Quiet Confidence

Why do some people seem to face the hardships of life with such sweet serenity, while others fall apart in desperate panic? The answer lies in how they look at God.

"For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.' But you would not." (Isa. 30:15).

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The nation to whom Isaiah spoke was too small and weak to stand up to the mighty Assyrians by themselves. They desperately needed help. But to whom could they turn? They saw foreign alliances as their best hope for salvation. Egypt was an especially promising ally (v. 2-3). If all else failed, they could always flee on swift horses (v. 16).

But God had a different view of their affairs. He warned that "the Egyptians shall help in vain" (v. 7), and their swift horses could not outrun their enemies (v. 16). He offered a better idea instead: *"In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."* If they would humble themselves and return to Him, He would guide them through these perilous days. Their strength would not be in themselves or their schemes, but in God, who alone had the power to save.

However, for the people of Judah, that option was strictly off the table: *"But you would not."* They despised God's word (v. 12) and refused to listen to His law (v. 9). As desperate their predicament may have been, they were not interested in His advice (v. 2). Their attitude toward God was simple: "get out of the way" (v. 11).

In other words, the people had no confidence in a deity they could not see, preferring to take their chances with whatever stratagems they could orchestrate on their own.

The circumstances may be different, but the same choice confronts us today. We are free to reject God and seek the answers to life's puzzles on our own. Many people choose that path, casting about here and there for some lifestyle, some career, some crutch that will help them be successful in life's game. But this self-help approach is a risky venture with a high probability of failure.

God's message to our generation remains the same: "return and rest" upon Him. Strength is to be found, not in our own cunning, but in "quietness and con-

fidence," trusting God to make everything right in His own way and in His own time.

The people who have learned to live this life of quiet confidence are the ones who are best equipped to handle the storms of life. They have no need for explosive displays of anger or flailing about in panic when faced with a crisis. When circumstances spiral out of their control, they are not overwhelmed by a feeling of helplessness or despair. Instead, their hearts are grounded in a firm conviction that *God* is in control, and everything will turn out for the best in the end. They may not understand why things happen the way they do, but it doesn't matter; they are prepared to accept whatever happens.

This quiet confidence is not to be confused with indifference. The same trust that strengthens our hearts in times of danger will also strengthen our hands for obedience in our daily routine. In *everything* we do, we view our life as resting in the capable hands of a wise and benevolent God, in whose care we find a peace the world cannot touch.

– David King